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Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd, Roselands, 3 Cross Green, Formby L37 4BH

Amphibian Reasonable Avoidance Measures Statement (RAMS)

Application Site: Land adjacent to Talfryn Cottage, Erbistock, Wrexham, LL13 0DF

Method Statement Objectives

Development related activities on the application site (named above), such as demolition, piling, vegetation clearance or excavation, in areas of suitable amphibian habitat, may potentially impact individuals which may inhabit the local area. As a result, safeguards must be applied to protect this species; the Method Statement below outlines sequential measures to be implemented to ensure these objectives are achieved.

This document has been produced in accordance with Condition 8 of the Decision Notice from Wrexham County Borough Council, which states:

"8. No development shall commence until a Great Crested Newt (GCN). Method Statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority."

Before Any Works

- Before any works commence at the application site, all site contractors/stakeholders will be briefed by 'Tool-box' talk of the potential for protected species to occur on site, what to look out for and what to do in the event that animals are found. This talk should cover identification aids and the legal ramifications of an offence through reckless behaviour.
- Contractors/stakeholders will ask any questions as required following the toolbox talk, before signing the Audit Form (see overleaf) which will be kept by the Ecologist/Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) for audit trail.
- Following the toolbox talk an "Environmental Champion" will be appointed, who will thereafter be responsible to report to the ECoW throughout the work schedule in the absence of ecological supervision.
- Photograph(s) will be displayed at the site office and/or kept by contractors for visual reference purposes.
- Construction works are to only take place during daylight hours as opposed to the night-time, when amphibians are most active.

Pre Works

Timings

- Juvenile and adult amphibians are most vulnerable to harm during their **hibernation period which is considered to be November to February** inclusive. Site clearance / preparation works should avoid this sensitive period. If this is not possible works carried out during this sensitive period (between November – February) should take into account, the potential presence of hibernating herpetofauna.
- Pre-commencement check – a site walkover to take place by an Ecologist/ECoW before any vegetation clearance, in order to pinpoint areas in which there may be a higher chance of encountering herpetofauna.

Demarcation of buffer zones

- Any buffer zones should be demarcated out using hazard/coloured tape and/or signage to avoid any encroachment/over-management occurring from the development site within this sensitive area.

Habitat manipulation (March-Oct)

- 3 to 5 days prior to stripping the site bare of vegetation in preparation for development, it is recommended that habitats are first trimmed in phases; initially trimmed to 150mm in height using brush cutters or similar approved methodology.

- Strimming should commence directionally south to north across the site at all cutting phases allowing animals to move off site or towards desired buffer zones or retained areas.
- Once vegetation is cut to 150mm a further site walkover should take place within 72 hours - following this, when Herptiles are confirmed absent, the vegetation should then be cut to ground level (or below 100mm), raked bare and maintained at this sward height thereafter. Habitat manipulation like this will discourage animals from using the area, given its exposedness, thus making them less likely to be harmed or impacted by works on site.

During Works

- Any clearance works to areas of interest/potential refugia as considered applicable by the Ecologist (such as brick/log piles, garden equipment, plant pots, etc) or loss of existing vegetative features (dense grass, tall ruderal, hedge, shrubbery, bracken, scrub), should only commence after a careful visual inspection (site walkover) has been carried out and the Ecologist has determined that no animals are present and is satisfied no animals are at risk.
- Any animals found will be removed from harm's way and placed into suitable buffer zones, species pending and following correct protocols/biosecurity measures.
- For the full duration, no works are to extend off site in the areas adjacent to the red line boundary or within agreed buffer zones. No pallets, skips or otherwise are to be placed upon areas of dense vegetation and should instead only be placed on flat, cleared ground to avoid animals getting underneath.
- The impact of works on adjacent habitats will be avoided by the clear demarcation of the works area. Implementing suitable pollution prevention measures in-line with Guidance for Pollution Prevention (GPP), specifically GPP2, GPP4, GPP5, GPP8, GPP13, GPP22 & GPP26.
- Contingency/emergency plans should be drawn up to address chemical spillage, drainage, collision, etc.
- Machinery and materials to remain on bare ground and reasonable efforts must be made to avoid creating piles, or accumulated aggregates. Materials that require piling will be stored within areas of bare ground above ground level, using pallets to prevent reptiles and amphibians from seeking shelter below.
- Any excavated materials or soils stored overnight will be searched prior to being used as infill.
- Where excavations/trenches are excavated - it should be ensured that they are not left open overnight to avoid amphibians falling into them and becoming trapped. If trenches cannot be filled in after the working day for whatever reason, an escape mechanism such as wooden planks of 50mm wide as a minimum should be placed in them at a 45 degree diagonal angle, to serve as an escape mechanism to small animals including mammals, reptiles & amphibians.
- Excavations should be checked in the morning on a daily basis for the presence of any animals that may have fallen in during the night.
- All site operatives will maintain a watching brief throughout the work schedule and report any issues, anomalies or discrepancies to the ecologist or wildlife champion as appointed.
- If an amphibian (or reptile) is found in the absence of supervision, work must stop immediately, and contact should be made with the assigned licensed, qualified ecologist / ECoW. At no point should any person handle a herptile without express consent from the qualified ecologist / ECoW.
- Any amphibians found should be carefully caught by the Ecologist, placed (where capture is possible and humane) in a ventilated box using dampened gloved hands and released into suitable nearby vegetation that will be unaffected by the proposed works. Toads should not be touched using non-gloved hands as they secrete a toxin through their skin, and they should not be handled for longer than is necessary.
- Plastic netting, wire coils or similar hazardous features should not be left on the ground, to avoid entanglement. Aggregates/constructional materials should be stored on pallets as opposed to the storing on the ground.
- If in the event a GCN is found work must cease; **the Ecologist will be made aware of the finding and will appraise the situation providing further advice.** Site staff must be made aware that if GCN are found there is a correct procedure in place to follow, and **failure to halt works may result in committing an offence.** At no point should any person handle a GCN or suspected GCN. Unlicensed handling is illegal and untrained handling may cause the newt unnecessary stress and injury.

A Guide to Timings

Operation	Seasonal Timings												Notes
Preliminary procedure													
Toolbox talk	Any time prior to works												Soon as possible for early understanding
Appoint Wildlife Champion	Following toolbox talk												-
Pre-works													
Buffer zone demarcation & signage	Pre-habit manipulation & site walkover												To avoid encroaching in sensitive areas
	Months												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
Buffer zone demarcation & signage	Pre-habitat manipulation & site walkover												To avoid encroaching in sensitive areas
Site Walkover by Ecologist			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Prior to habitat manipulation
Habitat Manipulation			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Staggered, as described, to allow animals to move away

Identification Aids

Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*)



Identification Tips

- Largest Newt in the UK, up to 16cm in length, but juveniles are smaller,
- Big & Black animal with rough, warty skin,
- Orange/yellow colouring on belly,
- Irregular black blotches on belly,
- Toes banded black/orange (Yellow toenails),
- Male has a jagged crest on its back which sags when not in the water, and a separate smoother crest along tail, white stripe on tail too,

DO

If a GCN is discovered during works,
STOP ALL WORKS in the area, inform
your site manager and contact the
project ecologist **IMMEDIATELY**.

DON'T

Do not touch or handle a GCN they are very
delicate – and it is against the law.
Penalties for breaking the law include
unlimited fines, imprisonment and seizure of
equipment.

DO NOT RISK BREAKING THE LAW

For any questions call Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd

Tel: 01704 875 781

Toolbox Talk Audit Form

Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd



Site:		Ecologist(s):	
I can confirm I have attended the formal Toolbox talk held by the named Ecological Consultant. I confirm I am aware of the legislation in relation to herpetofauna species that may be in the locale. I confirm I will endeavour, to the best of my capability, to follow the measures outlined in the RAMS to protect all animals from harm, and know what to do if I encounter protected species.			
Name:		Signed:	
Company:		Date	
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Company:		Date	
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